(c) Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) has drawn a comprehensive Rehabilitation and Resettlement scheme which will be implemented in consultation with the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Tailing ponds of UCIL

1026. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) tailing ponds are health risk for the villagers of adjoining areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the remedial steps Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) to (c) No, sir. The Tailings Ponds of UCIL are well engineered and properly managed repositories of neutralized waste emerging after recovery of uranium from low grade ores. the Tailings Ponds are properly fenced and the low levels of Gamma Radiation and Radon emanating from the deposited tailings are confined within the Tailings Pond boundary.

The Health Physics unit of BARC at Jaduguda carries out environmental monitoring of the region. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board and State and Central Pollution Control Boards review the monitoring results and inspect the site periodically to enforce compliance with the regulatory norms.

Supply of uranium for nuclear power plants

1027. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) in view of the situation arising out of non availability of urea due to depending on high cost imported urea, whether Government have visualized the similar scenario may emerge in power sector, also if the country depends on the imported uranium for running nuclear power plants as the international cost of uranium may go high, leading to escalation in cost of power; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to meet the impending situation thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) The component of fuel cost in generation tariff in case of nuclear power is about 20% as against 40-60% in case of coal, the dominant technology for power generation in India. Thus, nuclear power is less susceptible to fluctuation in fuel price.

(b) As a part of our strategy, power production from domestic nuclear energy resources would receive highest priority. The current initiatives for international cooperation in nuclear energy are aimed at accessing the international market for technologies and fuel, for setting up additionalities to the domestic programme, to enable large capacity addition, to meet the electricity demand in the near term.

Allocation of coal blocks for captive coal mining

1028. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry plans to allocate 38 coal blocks for captive coal mining with the total coal reserves of 62,907.08 million tonnes situated in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh to the power, iron, steel and cement sectors by 2007;

(b) whether his Ministry has asked the interested companies to file their applications by January 12, 2007 and registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956 for the allocation of one or more coal blocks of the 38 blocks; and

(c) if so, by when they are likely to be allocated these blocks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. However, the coal reserves in 38 blocks to be allocated through the Screening Committee route is estimated to be 6086.67 million tonnes.

(b) and (c) The applications received shall be considered by the Screening Committee which is an inter-ministerial, inter-Governmental group, set up for this purpose. The allocation of coal blocks shall be decided by the Government after receiving the recommendations of the Screening Committee.